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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3585  
INFO RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 2809  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 3566  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 2626  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 8975  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 4475  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC  
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC  
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC  
RUEAEPA/EPA WASHDC  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 002587

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/ENV, OES/IHA, AND SCA/INS  
HHS FOR OGHA STEIGER, HICKEY AND VALDEZ  
NIH FOR GLASS AND MAMPILLY  
CDC FOR BLOUNT, FARRELL, AND MILLER  
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [SOCI](#) [KSCA](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: KILLER IN THE INDIAN KITCHEN: INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

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11. SUMMARY. On September 5-6, 2008, the Indo-U.S. Collaboration on Environmental and Occupational Health Joint Working Group convened a workshop on indoor air pollution (IAP) and respiratory health in Chandigarh, India. IAP kills between 400,000 and 2 million Indians each year and is one of the country's top environmental health threats. The Government of India (GOI) has a mixed record addressing the IAP issue in that it can be credited with creating programs targeted at reducing IAP but faulted for poorly implementing them. Indian NGOs feel the Ministry of Health (MOH) should become more involved and that future programs should combine the efforts of several ministries and make greater use of public awareness and social marketing techniques to help people understand the negative health impacts of indoor air pollution. END SUMMARY.

12. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), indoor air pollution from cookstoves fuelled with wood, cow dung, coal, and other solid fuels ranks third amongst risks to human health in India - just below malnutrition and lack of safe sanitation and drinking water. The WHO cites a growing body of scientific studies indicating India suffers between 400,000 and 2 million premature deaths annually from IAP with a majority of deaths occurring in children under five due to acute respiratory illness or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The threat of IAP disproportionately affects women and children who spend more hours inside the home as compared to men.

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GOI Cooking Technology: Millions Poorly Served,  
Millions More Still Waiting  
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13. The GOI has supported several large-scale programs since the 1980s to reduce exposure to IAP. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) implemented the National Program on Improved Chulas (NPIC) from 1986 until 2002, in partnership with other governmental entities, NGOs, and rural entrepreneurs. The program distributed over 35 million improved clay and mud chulas (stoves) throughout the country, covering nearly 30 percent of the estimated potential of 120 million households. An evaluation study in 2001, however, found that only 57 percent of the chulas installed were still in use.

14. MNRE also currently supports a long-standing and slow-moving project to develop household biogas plants called the National Biogas and Manure Management Program. Launched in 1982, the project's stated goals are to provide biogas cook fuel, produce manure for agriculture, mitigate the drudgery of rural women, reduce pressure on forests, and to improve sanitation in villages by linking toilets with biogas plants. As of March 2007 the program has distributed 3.9 million plants with a total expenditure of approximately \$270 million. The 2008 - 2009 target is to add an additional 116,500 biogas plants.

15. MNRE has also been working with state governments and NGOs to promote and distribute 600,000 solar cookers at a cost of \$22 to \$55 per unit. However, according to a report prepared for the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air (PCIA) by Winrock International, solar cookers have not been widely accepted because much of the rural population does its cooking before sunrise thereby rendering solar cookers useless. In addition, Indian cuisine relies heavily on frying which cannot be done in a solar cooker.

16. The GOI's Eleventh Five-year Plan (2007-2012) refers to IAP as an "important issue concerning women and children's health which requires immediate and special attention." It proposes to provide up to 90 percent subsidies for a "common component for cooking" using renewable energy to one million households in remote villages and hamlets. It also aims to subsidize up to 33 percent of the cost of 2 million biogas plants for families and communities.

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Partnership for Clean Indoor Air  
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17. The USEPA-sponsored PCIA has an active presence in India.

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Twenty-four local organizations have joined PCIA, including 17 NGOs, 4 private-sector companies, 2 academic institutions, and a state government centre. In 2002, EPA awarded two PCIA pilot grants for approximately \$100,000 each to the Indian NGOs Development Alternatives (DA) and the Alternative Rural Technology Institute to introduce improved woodburning and biogas stoves in rural areas. In 2007 PCIA hosted its 3rd Biennial Forum in Bangalore, where more than 100 household energy and health leaders from around the world gathered to discuss their activities and share lessons learned.

18. PCIA also commissioned Winrock International to write a report titled "Household Energy, Indoor Air Pollution and Health: Overview of Experience and Lessons in India." The report concluded that most of the beneficiaries of IAP related interventions in India had no information about the adverse health impacts of indoor air pollution. In this respect the programs missed an opportunity to increase demand for their product. The report also suggested designing and disseminating more "appropriate" stoves through user involvement and training, as well as providing technology with a need-based-approach, as opposed to a target-oriented approach, which has led to a mismatch in supply and demand.

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The View from the Village: Indian NGOs Experience  
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19. EmbOffs met with staff from Development Alternatives and Winrock International to discuss their efforts to reduce exposure to smoke from household cookstoves. Development Alternatives designs and tests stoves for communities throughout India and used their EPA grant to perform social marketing for improved cookstoves in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. DA staff said many users felt the new stoves presented a tradeoff in that they reduced smoke and ash but were harder to heat quickly. In addition, DA fielded many complaints over the inability of the stoves to use cow dung as a fuel - not only as a matter of economy but also of taste. DA told EmbOffs that many people feel dung smoke imparts a specific and much appreciated flavor to rural dishes which could not be duplicated by the new stoves. DA said more R&D in stove technology is needed because incremental advances will not be sufficient to win over the

rural consumer. DA argues only a "quantum leap" in stove technology at a minimum increased cost (less than USD 5.00 per stove) will gain widespread acceptance.

¶10. Emboffs also met with Winrock International India who had helped evaluate the NPIC program and currently has approximately 100 stoves installed in pilot projects around India. Winrock staffer Arvind Reddy noted several lessons learned from their experience fielding new cookstove technology in India including: inability to install wind and weather resistant chimneys in existing huts; increased labor intensity as many clean-burning stoves require finely chopped wood for fuel; and lack of interest by husbands, who control major household purchases, in investing in new cookstoves due to the fact they spend most of their time outdoors and do not suffer from IAP to the same degree as their wives and children.

¶11. According to DA, the biggest collective mistake of NGOs in regard to IAP has been the failure to get the media more involved in warning of the danger of indoor air pollution. DA also said IAP has not been an important issue for the government, although the PCIA has been helpful in networking non-governmental organizations. Winrock commented that no one in government, including MNRE, is talking about IAP as a health issue anymore despite the continued death toll. Both NGOs agreed that the Ministry of Health needs to get more involved in getting out the message on indoor air pollution and that future programs must use more social marketing to help people understand the seriousness of the health impact of IAP. However, both NGOs candidly noted the GOI has shied away from improved cookstove distribution programs because they are an "administrative nightmare" which no GOI official wants to champion.

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Smoke on the Horizon: Indo-U.S. Collaboration  
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¶12. In June 2008 the Indo-.S. Collaboration on Environmental and Occupational Health Joint Working Group agreed to create a small sub-group composed of key staff and experts from both countries to begin work on a defined plan for IAP and respiratory health related research to be conducted in India. The plan will include the development of specific "concept proposals" for consideration by governmental and non-governmental funding agencies. The Joint Working Group also agreed to convene a workshop on IAP and respiratory health which took place September 5-6, 2008 in Chandigarh, India.

¶13. The workshop was co-chaired by Dr. Surinder K. Jindal of the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) and by Dr. William J. Martin of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. The workshop was hosted by PGIMER Chandigarh and supported by CDC, NIH, the Indian Council on Medical Research, USEPA, and two private partners, the Health Effects Institute and the American Thoracic Society. The workshop was attended by 40 U.S. and Indian experts in clinical and public health research. Among the issues discussed were the prevalence of respiratory diseases in India, the impact of tobacco, emerging issues in the area of occupational respiratory disease, and the respiratory and health effects of indoor air pollution with a special focus on the effects of IAP on the health of women and children. The attendees discussed several proposals for increased collaboration in both public health and education with the view to creating a National Consultation on Indoor Air Pollution.

¶13. COMMENT. Although the GOI has several programs targeted at reducing indoor air pollution, the poor implementation and lack of interest by senior officials has provided very little relief for the 800 million estimated Indians still suffering the respiratory impacts of using wood, cow dung, coal, and other solid fuels for household cooking. In addition, since the early 1980s the issue has been driven mainly by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, whose primary interest has been on installations, with little effort put towards educating the public on the reasons why new and healthier cookstoves are necessary. In order to substantially reduce IAP in India, the GOI needs an inter-ministerial effort,

including a public awareness campaign, involving MNRE, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Rural Development with buy-in from state and local governments. END COMMENT.

DAVISON